

June 2025



THE SOCIAL DOWNLOAD

A monthly guide
to evolving social
platforms, trends &
opportunities for brands

Foreword and summary

This month's social media landscape continues to evolve at pace, with platforms doubling down on video, private engagement, and ad innovation.

A consistent theme is more immersive, mobile-first and interactive experiences, as well as expanded ad tools and better data access for brands. Short-form video continues its dominance, while community-building features, gamification, and secure communication channels rise in importance.

The lines between social platforms and broader media ecosystems are increasingly blurred - with platforms like Discord, Substack, and Twitch making strong plays for deeper, cross-channel engagement.

Our top 12

Social Media Updates

& what they mean for brands

01. TikTok

UK becomes TikTok's top European market amid wellness & music expansions

TikTok now counts over 30 million monthly users in the UK, making it the app's largest audience in Europe.

At the same time, TikTok is testing a new night time meditation feature aimed at improving digital wellbeing among teens with early tests showing a 98% opt-in rate.

Additionally, a new SoundCloud integration allows users to save songs discovered in TikTok's directly to their SoundCloud libraries, reinforcing the platform's role as a powerful music discovery engine.

What it means:

- Build wellness-aligned content: Participate in or launch campaigns that encourage mindfulness, screen breaks, or evening wind-down routines to align with TikTok's wellbeing narrative and appeal to Gen Z.
- Create sound-forward campaigns: Use the SoundCloud integration as a launchpad and drop original branded tracks, commission short-form audio for challenges, or collaborate with emerging UK artists.
- Position your brand as values-driven: TikTok's focus on user health and creativity signals a shift toward more conscious content environments, offering brands a safer, more meaningful space to engage.
- Localise for the UK: With over 30M active users, now is the time to invest in UK-specific content strategies, creator partnerships, and cultural relevance.

02. LinkedIn

'First Impression' video ads give brands the opening word

LinkedIn continues to lean into video, with its new "First Impression Ads" offering brands the top video ad slot for a given audience each day.

Combined with increased video consumption and higher-than-average completion rates, this creates an exclusive way to break through in B2B marketing.

What it means:

- Explore First Impression Ads to gain front-of-funnel dominance in key verticals (if you have access).
- Design bold, mobile-first, vertical video creatives optimised for immediate impact.
- Integrate LinkedIn video into broader B2B content strategy to capitalise on growing engagement.

03. Instagram

Instagram introduces 'Blend' and secure team collaboration tools

Instagram's new "Blend" feature creates a shared Reels feed between two friends, curated by both of their algorithms.

Simultaneously, the platform is enhancing security and workflow by enabling individual logins for team-managed brand accounts - no more shared passwords.

What it means:

- Prioritise content that feels share-worthy in DMs - emotional, surprising, or relatable.
- Treat private sharing as a new discovery engine; optimise for quiet virality.
- Set up secure, collaborative access for team members via Meta's Account Centre to boost efficiency and safeguard brand integrity.

04. Facebook

New ways to ride the viral wave with Reels ad innovations

Facebook has introduced "Reels Trending Ads," allowing brands to place ads directly after viral Reels, capitalising on cultural momentum in near-real-time. In tandem, the platform is expanding the amount of video ad inventory available within Reels. This opens up more prime real estate for brands looking to engage mobile-first and Gen Z audiences with short-form video.

What it means:

- Use trending Reels ad placements to align your brand with viral moments during product drops, events, or key cultural trends.
- Create mobile-first, video-first assets (especially short-form content) to maximise reach within the expanded Reels ad inventory.
- Run reactive, culturally relevant ads with faster creative turnaround for better engagement.

05. Snapchat

Snapchat doubles down on AR, wearables and Bitmoji gaming

Snapchat's expansion to the Apple Watch enables emoji, voice and text replies from users' wrists, increasing cross-device utility.

Meanwhile, new mobile-friendly Lens Studio tools and Bitmoji game creation features aim to lower the barrier for brands and creators to build AR and gamified experiences.

What it means:

- Build time-sensitive promotions that tap into quick "micro-moment" interactions on wearables.
- Launch branded AR Lenses or community Lens challenges using the streamlined mobile/web Lens Studio.
- Test Bitmoji-based game experiences to drive playful engagement, competition and brand personality.

06. YouTube

Smarter mid-roll ads and retail data integration boost video ROI

YouTube is now placing mid-roll ads only at natural breaks in content to improve viewer experience, with early tests showing up to 5% revenue boost for creators.

Google is also adding retail data to DV360 campaigns, enhancing YouTube's role as both a performance and branding platform.

What it means:

- Align ads with natural breaks and use a mix of manual and automatic placements to drive higher ROI.
- Combine DV360 retail data with YouTube targeting to increase both awareness and conversions.
- Optimise creatives for seamlessness to preserve content flow and viewer trust.

07. Bluesky

Bluesky teases monetisation & native communities as it grows up

Bluesky is rolling out verification and prepping the move of communities into the core app experience. Upcoming ad formats (still undefined) promise to diverge from traditional models.

Notably, the platform is avoiding link downranking, keeping outbound content fully visible.

What it means:

- Expect new ad formats and consider early experimentation with native campaign content when advertising opens up.
- Brands with smaller audiences can still drive strong link traffic thanks to Bluesky's neutral algorithm - ideal for start-ups and niche players.
- Keep an eye on Bluesky communities - owning or engaging in key interest groups could become valuable real estate.

08. Substack

Substack doubles down on live audio with new livestreaming option

Substack's latest update brings audio-only livestreams to the platform, making it easier for creators to host live discussions without the demands of being on camera.

This enhances its versatility for brands seeking authentic, conversational engagement in real time.

What it means:

- Partner with Substack creators to host live audio sessions around product education, AMAs, or expert-led conversations.
- Use audio-only streams for brand thought leadership without the need for heavy production.
- Tap into highly engaged, niche communities for targeted reach and meaningful dialogue.

09. Twitch

Twitch announces vertical streaming, rewind features & inclusive tools

Twitch is introducing vertical livestreams for mobile, 2K resolution beta, rewind capabilities, and new engagement formats (like Combos and custom sub gifts).

Arabic language support and improved mobile moderation tools signal a more inclusive and flexible direction for both streamers and viewers.

What it means:

- Embrace vertical video for better mobile engagement during sponsored streams.
- Use new tools like Combos and gift subs to boost interaction and viewer loyalty.
- Create shareable clips from rewind functionality to extend campaign lifespan and impact.
- Explore Arabic-language content to connect with growing audiences in MENA.

10. X

Privacy, utility, and integrity updates continue X's platform evolution

X is focusing on improving user experience and credibility: encrypted DMs are rolling out via XChat, Community Notes is now more resistant to manipulation, and email addresses enclosed in <> now generate clickable links for easier contact.

What it means:

- Post verified, transparent content to avoid being flagged by Community Notes.
- Add clickable email links in bios and posts to enable direct communication with followers and customers.
- Explore how encrypted messaging could serve for customer service or private support interactions.

11. Reddit

Reddit Pro launches as platform celebrates first-ever profitable quarter

Reddit unveils Reddit Pro, a central hub for brands offering audience insights, publishing tools and scheduling.

Coupled with its first profitable quarter, Reddit is positioned to invest more heavily in ad products and data tools - making it an increasingly valuable marketing channel.

What it means:

- Sign up for Reddit Pro or talk to your agency about early access - this is a crucial tool for targeted engagement and media planning.
- Use Reddit insights to target niche communities with high-intent audiences.
- Monitor brand mentions proactively, as Reddit's influence on purchase decisions continues to grow.

12. Discord

Gamified ads & in-app currency bring new ways to reward engagement

Discord has introduced Orbs, an in-app currency earned by users for engaging in branded tasks like ad-watching or game streaming.

Video Quests are also now available on mobile, allowing users to earn rewards in exchange for ad views and making Discord more accessible for a range of brands beyond gaming.

What it means:

- Use Video Quests and Orbs to reward engagement with your brand in ways that feel fun and native to Discord culture.
- Craft gamified activations or experiences within your Discord server (challenges, leaderboards, exclusive perks).
- Tailor mobile-first video content that aligns with the platform's reward mechanics to maximise exposure.



Key takeaways & actionable steps...

Prioritise short-form, mobile-first video

Every platform is pushing vertical video and in-feed content - invest in snappy, well-edited creatives.

Gamify engagement where possible

From Bitmoji games on Snapchat to Orbs on Discord, playful content is winning attention.

Think privacy-first and credible

Platforms like X and Reddit are cracking down on misinformation - be transparent and factual.

Start planning for emerging platforms

Bluesky, Substack, and Reddit are growing in importance - early brand presence pays off.

Be shareable in DMs, not just public feeds

Audiences are shifting from X to Threads, exploring Bluesky - brands should be present where conversations move next.

Leverage platform tools

From Reddit Pro to LinkedIn's First Impressions, tap into new ad features before competitors do.

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